

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original): An anchor for installing a plank in a deck system comprising:

a base portion,

a plank-engaging portion having at least one protrusion, and

at least one fastener aperture having a longitudinal axis which is inclined from vertical and extends through the plank-engaging portion and at least a portion of the base portion.
2. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the anchor has substantially planar side walls, and wherein a cross-section of the plank-engaging portion is substantially circular or oval in shape.
3. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two curved protrusions capable of engaging corresponding anchor-engaging grooves on a deck plank.
4. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the plank-engaging portion includes a substantially planar section, and wherein an entrance of the fastener aperture is located on the planar section.
5. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the anchor includes a first and second fastener aperture, and wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two curved protrusions, each curved protrusion having a substantially planar section, and wherein the planar section of each protrusion includes an entrance to a respective fastener aperture.

6. (Original): The anchor of claim 5, wherein the first and second fastener apertures are overlapping.
7. (Withdrawn): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the plank-engaging portion is substantially spherical, spheroidal or ellipsoidal.
8. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the anchor includes a first and second fastener aperture, and wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two curved protrusions, each curved protrusion having a substantially planar section, and wherein the planar section of each protrusion includes an entrance to a respective fastener aperture.
9. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the fastener aperture is at an angle of between five and sixty degrees from vertical.
10. (Withdrawn): The anchor of claim 1, wherein fastener aperture extends at least partially through a side of the base portion.
11. (Original): The anchor of claim 1, wherein an exit point for the fastener aperture is entirely enclosed within a bottom surface of the base portion.
12. (Withdrawn): The anchor of claim 1, wherein the base portion includes a first and second end, and wherein each end of the base portion terminates short of a respective end of the plank-engaging portion a sufficient distance to allow the plank-engaging portion end to secure a plank.
13. (Original): A decking system comprising:

a plurality of anchors, each anchor having a base portion, a plank-engaging portion having at least one protrusion, and at least one fastener aperture with a longitudinal axis disposed obliquely from a vertical plane and extending through the base portion and plank-engaging portion, and

a plurality of planks including a side wall having an anchor-engaging groove for cooperating with a corresponding protrusion of a corresponding anchor.

14. (Original): The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchor-engaging groove of the planks extends substantially the entire length of the planks.

15. (Withdrawn): The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchors have a length that is substantially the same length as an adjacent plank.

16. (Withdrawn): The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchors have a length extending at least the distance between two adjacent joists.

17. (Original): The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchors include two protrusions, each protrusion having a top portion which serves as an entry point for a plurality of fastener apertures positioned intermittently along the length of the anchors.

18. (Withdrawn): The decking system of claim 13, wherein the plank-engaging portion of the anchors is substantially spherical, spheroidal or ellipsoidal, and wherein the anchors include a first and second fastener aperture, and wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two substantially planar sections, and wherein each planar section includes an entrance to a respective fastener aperture.

19. (Original): A method of installing a deck system comprising:

providing a first plank having an anchor-engaging groove,

providing a first anchor having a plank engaging portion and a fastener aperture having a longitudinal axis which is disposed obliquely from a vertical plane,

laying the first plank on a decking joist,

inserting the plank-engaging portion of the first anchor into the anchor-engaging groove of the first plank, and

inserting a first fastener through the fastener aperture and into the decking joist.

20. (Original): The method of claim 19, wherein said inserting a fastener step comprises providing frictional contact between said fastener and said anchor, and between said anchor and said anchor-engaging groove, so as to automatically control the position of said anchor to create a tight joint without further contact with the anchor by an installer.

21. (Original): The method of claim 19, further comprising:

providing a second plank having a first and second anchor-engaging groove,

providing a second anchor having a plank-engaging portion and a fastener aperture having a longitudinal axis which is disposed obliquely from a vertical plane,

laying the second plank on the decking joist adjacent the first plank with the first anchor-engaging groove of the second plank engaging the plank-engaging portion of the first anchor, and

inserting the plank-engaging portion of the second anchor into the second anchor-engaging groove of the second plank, and

inserting a second fastener through the fastener aperture of the second anchor and into the decking joist

22. (Original): A decking system, comprising:

a plurality of decking planks disposed over supporting joists, each of said decking planks having first and second curvilinear side edge portions;

a plurality of anchors having first and second side surfaces capable of frictionally mating between a first and a second curvilinear side edge portion of adjacent ones of said decking planks;

a plurality of fasteners disposed through said anchors at an oblique angle from vertical for joining said decking planks to said supporting joists.

23. (Original): The decking system of claim 22, wherein a pair of adjacent decking planks are locked together by at least one of said anchors.

24. (Original): The decking system of claim 23, wherein each of said anchors has at least one aperture therethrough disposed at an oblique angle from a vertical plane.

25. (Original): A decking anchor having a generally key-hole shaped cross-section, and a planar bottom surface.

26. (Original): The decking anchor of claim 25 having an aperture disposed therethrough from a top surface to said planar bottom surface.

27. (Original): The decking anchor of claim 27, wherein said aperture has a longitudinal axis disposed at an oblique angle from vertical.

28. (Original): A system for anchoring adjacent planar members to a base member comprising:

a plurality of anchors, each anchor having a base portion, a planar member-engaging portion having at least one protrusion, and at least one fastener aperture with a longitudinal axis disposed obliquely from a vertical plane and extending through the base portion and planar member-engaging portion,

a plurality of planar members including a side wall having an anchor-engaging groove for cooperating with a corresponding protrusion of a corresponding anchor, and

at least one base member into which the anchors are fastened.

29. (Original): The system of claim 28, wherein the planar members are planks which form a deck.

30. (Original): The system of claim 29, wherein the base member is a joist.

31. (Canceled).

32. (Canceled): .

33. (Original): The system of claim 28, wherein the anchors are substantially hidden from view.

34. (New): The system of claim 22, wherein the anchors have a length that is about the width of the joists.

35. (New): The system of claim 22, wherein the anchors have a length that is less than the width of the joists.